



CAPITOL UPDATE

OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE
Penny Bernard Schaber

Serving the heart of Appleton



The importance of Labor Day has never been more evident than it is in the state of Wisconsin in 2011. Yes, Labor Day always marks the end of summer, just as Memorial Day kicks off the beginning of the season with picnics, gatherings and barbecues. But in a year when workers have been under attack, demeaned and had their rights stripped away, all of us who benefit from the work of teachers, firefighters, public health nurses, snow-plow drivers, police officers and so many other laborers owe them a special thanks on this Labor Day.

This year, of all years, we cannot forget what Memorial Day and Labor Day are truly about. On Memorial Day, we honor the people who have fought for our freedom and made the ultimate sacrifice - their lives. On Labor Day, we honor the people who have fought for our middle-class way of life, some of whom have also made that ultimate sacrifice. American laborers were once told they had no right to vacations, safe workplace conditions, health care or any benefits. There was no such thing as a weekend, as they worked 12-hour days, six days a week.

Wisconsin was the birthplace of workers' rights, and workers and activists in our state played a critical role in securing the rights that workers all over the country enjoy today. They helped pass legislation such as workers' compensation and unemployment insurance, and other states soon followed suit.

The fight for workers' rights evolved as Wisconsin's economy evolved over the years, from industrialized agriculture to the development of industries such as mining and lumber to the growth of manufacturing. But Wisconsin workers in all types of jobs have always been at the forefront of the labor movement, pushing for family-supporting wages, better working conditions and needed benefits.

Earlier this year, working people from across Wisconsin came to the Capitol to fight to keep their rights. It was shocking to hear those who wanted to take away those rights hurl extremely derisive comments at the women and men who work alongside our children, keep us safe and make our communities livable.

I was honored to fight hard alongside Wisconsin workers. Unfortunately, the people who control state government refused to compromise in the slightest, refused to negotiate and refused even to sit down at the table with their employees and hear them out. And when workers volunteered to slash their own paychecks in hopes they could keep the rights they had earned 50 years ago, they were not thanked or even acknowledged. The cuts came - and their rights were stolen, as well.

Now, more than ever, we must work together - and fight together - to ensure that Wisconsin workers continue to receive the basic rights for which so many have given so much. In the

meantime - today and every day - we say thank you to our Wisconsin workers and to all those who have stood up for Wisconsin values.

Penny's Pointers:

The Wisconsin Dept. of Public Instruction has compiled a list of resources available for our military service members and their families. It includes information on veterans' benefits, books on helping kids cope with their parent's deployment, and other helpful tools. If you or someone you know has had a family member deployed or return from deployment, I hope you'll find something in here that helps:

http://www.dpi.wi.gov/sspw/pdf/oef_oiffamilyresources.pdf

<http://www.dpi.wi.gov/sspw/pdf/militaryteentlkt.pdf>

Please feel free to contact my office at 608-266-3070 if there is anything else you need.

Office Hours:

If you'd like to meet with me one-on-one, I will be holding office hours this Thursday, September 8, from 6:00-7:30pm at the Harmony Café in Appleton. The address is 233 E College Ave. I look forward to seeing you there!

Events:

Do you have an event you would like Penny to attend in Appleton? If so, please contact her office at 608-266-3070 or email rep.bernardschaber@legis.wi.gov.

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